INTRODUCTION TO THE SCIENCE OF SOCIOLOGY

By

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PREFACE

The materials upon which this book is based have been collected from a wide range of sources and represent the observation and reflection of men who have seen life from very different points of view. This was necessary in order to bring into the perspective of a single volume the whole wide range of social organization and human life which is the subject-matter of a science of society.

At the same time an effort has been made to bring this material within the limits of a very definite series of sociological conceptions which suggest, at any rate, where they do not clearly exhibit, the fundamental relations of the parts to one another and to the concepts and contents of the volume as a whole.

The Introduction to the Science of Sociology is not conceived as a mere collection of materials, however, but as a systematic treatise. On the other hand, the excerpts which make up the body of the book are not to be regarded as mere illustrations. In the context in which they appear, and with the headings which indicate their place in the volume, they should enable the student to formulate for himself the principles involved. An experience of some years, during which this book has been in preparation, has demonstrated the value to the teacher of a body of materials that are interesting in themselves and that appeal to the experience of the student. If students are invited to take an active part in the task of interpretation of the text, if they are encouraged to use the references in order to extend their knowledge of the subject-matter and to check and supplement classroom discussion by their personal observation, their whole attitude becomes active rather than passive. Students gain in this way a sense of dealing at first hand with a subject-matter that is alive and with a science that is in the making. Under these conditions sociology becomes a common enterprise in which all members of the class participate; to which, by their observation and investigation, they can and should make contributions.

The first thing that students in sociology need to learn is to observe and record their own observations; to read, and then to select and record the materials which are the fruits of their readings;

to organize and use, in short, their own experience. The whole organization of this volume may be taken as an illustration of a method, at once tentative and experimental, for the collection, classification, and interpretation of materials, and should be used by students from the very outset in all their reading and study.

Social questions have been endlessly discussed, and it is important that they should be. What the student needs to learn, however, is how to get facts rather than formulate opinions. The most important facts that sociologists have to deal with are opinions (attitudes and sentiments), but until students learn to deal with opinions as the biologists deal with organisms, that is, to dissect them—reduce them to their component elements, describe them, and define the situation (environment) to which they are a response—we must not expect very great progress in sociological science.

It will be noticed that every single chapter, except the first, falls naturally into four parts; (1) the introduction, (2) the materials, (3) investigations and problems, and (4) bibliography. The first two parts of each chapter are intended to raise questions rather than to answer them. The last two, on the other hand, should outline or suggest problems for further study. The bibliographies have been selected mainly to exhibit the recognized points of view with regard to the questions raised, and to suggest the practical problems that grow out of, and are related to, the subject of the chapter as a whole.

The bibliographies, which accompany the chapters, it needs to be said, are intended to be representative rather than authoritative or complete. An attempt has been made to bring together literature that would exhibit the range, the divergence, the distinctive character of the writings and points of view upon a single topic. The results are naturally subject to criticism and revision.

A word should be said in regard to chapter i. It seemed necessary and important, in view of the general vagueness and uncertainty in regard to the place of sociology among the sciences and its relation to the other social sciences, particularly to history, to state somewhere, clearly and definitely, what, from the point of view of this volume, sociology is. This resulted finally in the imposition of a rather formidable essay upon what is in other respects, we trust, a relatively concrete and intelligible book. Under these circumstances we suggest that, unless the reader is specially interested in the matter,

he begin with the chapter on "Human Nature," and read the first

chapter last.

The editors desire to express their indebtedness to Dr. W. I. Thomas for the point of view and the scheme of organization of materials which have been largely adopted in this book. They are also under obligations to their colleagues, Professor Albion W. Small, Professor Ellsworth Faris, and Professor Leon C. Marshall, for constant stimulus, encouragement, and assistance. They wish to acknowledge the co-operation and the courtesy of their publishers, all the more appreciated because of the difficult technical task involved in the preparation of this volume. In preparing copy for publication and in reading proof, invaluable service was rendered by Miss Roberta Burgess.

Finally the editors are bound to express their indebtedness to the writers and publishers who have granted their permission to use the materials from which this volume has been put together. Without the use of these materials it would not have been possible to exhibit the many and varied types of observation and reflection which have contributed to present-day knowledge of social life. In order to give this volume a systematic character it has been necessary to tear these excerpts from their contexts and to put them, sometimes, into strange categories. In doing this it will no doubt have happened that some false impressions have been created. This was perhaps inevitable and to be expected. On the other hand these brief excerpts offered here will serve, it is hoped, as an introduction to the works from which they have been taken, and, together with the bibliographies which accompany them, will serve further to direct and stimulate the reading and research of students. The co-operation of the following publishers, organizations and journals, in giving, by special arrangement, permission to use selections from copyright material, was therefore distinctly appreciated by the editors:

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¹ See Source Book for Social Origins. Ethnological materials, psychological standpoint, classified and annotated bibliographies for the interpretation of savage society (Chicago, 1909).

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